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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Agricultural Marketing Administration

No. 18

AMA "WAR BOARD" LETTER Wash., D. C., May 30, 1942

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DEHYDRATION: Looms steadily larger, particularly for Lend-Lease foods. A report to the Secretary of Agriculture on a broad dehydration program has been made by a committee of AMA officials. Taking the water out of foods saves valuable wartime shipping space. A brief summary of what's been done so far in the dehydration field follows:

DRIED MILK: Substantial switch from evaporated to dried milk for Lend-Lease will be encouraged. Also imperative is trend from evaporated production, in areas where other processing and marketing outlets are available, to spray dry skim and butter, and dried whole milk.. This is for your information only. Watch for letter in next few days to WB's and industry giving full information. Current rate of evaporated production and stocks on hand are much larger than necessary to meet 1942-43 requirements. This does NOT mean that total milk production should be curtailed. Should be kept at highest possible peak where there are marketing facilities to assure continued vital supplies. L-L demand has shifted from evaporated to dried milk because of shipping situation. For every 100 pounds gross shipping weight you can send 86 pounds dried milk abroad compared with only 23 lbs. in evaporated form. AMA is enlarging purchases of spray dried skim milk also taking spray dried whole milk (WB Letter 17). Will continue to buy all dry skim, American cheese and evaporated milk offered within certain grade and price levels. During past year AMA has purchased more than 333,000,000 pounds American cheese, 155,000,000 pounds dry skim milk, 36,000,000 cases evaporated milk, 8,000,000 pounds of butter and 4,000,000 pounds of dried whole milk.

DRIED EGGS: Prior to 1941 US dried egg production ran about 10,000,000 lbs. with a plant capacity of 50,000,000 lbs. This has been built up now to production of 280,000,000 lbs. (FYI-AMA has approved plants that would provide 90,000,000 lbs. more.) This latter production is dependent upon getting priorities for materials, however. Egg purchases for most part are being held to dried egg spots and future. This purchase method allows processors to plan operations and should stabilize egg market on year around basis, eliminating drastic price recessions in peak production periods. AMA buying between 5 and 8 million pounds dried eggs weekly. Ten firms have contracts to pack dried eggs for L-L in 5 oz. air, moisture, light, and grease proof containers. Each package contains equivalent of 12 shell eggs and is handy for home use. Expect about 20,000,000 of these 5 oz. packages to move into L-L monthly.

DEHYDRATED VEGETABLES: Program for expansion of dehydrated vegetable production (WB letter No. 16) has been announced by USDA. Existing vegetable dehydrators will be invited to expand present facilities, and experienced food processors will be assisted where necessary to convert part or all their plants to dehydration. Approval of USDA necessary to participate; technical assistance will be furnished new firms. War Department and WPB will cooperate in program. USDA will contract with processor meeting requirements of program for that part their dehydrated vegetable production needed to meet domestic, L-L and military requirements, on both current and future delivery basis. Specifications being drafted. Dept. also will assist in seeking priorities for materials needed to expand or convert plants of firms selected to participate. Program will seek increased production of dehydrated white and sweet potatoes, onions, cabbage, carrots, beets, and rutabagas. Plants interested in program should contact AMA Fruit and Vegetable Branch, here. Consideration of applications will take into account: 1. location with respect to war strategy; 2. suitability of plant for expansion or conversion; 3. availability of experienced management and labor; 4. possibility of converting with least possible use of critical

materials; 5. availability of ample vegetable supplies; 6. availability of production and harvest labor; 7. ability of plant operators to arrange financing of expansion or conversion and 8. geographical and climatic conditions affecting suitability of vegetables for dehydration.

CONTAINERS: General outlook for BAGS is good according to OAWR. WPB order (L-99) providing for increased production of fabric by cotton mills will aid considerably. Estimated that cotton fabric production will be increased from 14,000,000,000 to 15,000,000,000 yds. by 1943. Situation regarding CRATES, HAMPERS, BOXES, about same as last week (WB Letter No. 17).

FARM LABOR: Farm Labor survey (WB letter No. 16) reveals great need for educating farmers to fact that problem must be worked out on "grass roots" basis; that they must take advantage of Government organizations dealing with problem and work out their own program from the farm level. Recommendations covering following points were developed from survey and are being considered now: 1. Program for transporting necessary workers from one area to another. Possibility that something be done on this soon. 2. US Employment Service should be expanded to staff local offices with farm placement men and streamlined to expedite clearance of available workers from one area to another. 3. Further clarification of coordination between WB's and farm labor subcommittees of Planning Committees. 4. There will be NO expansion of program to use conscientious objectors on farms until experiments in Wisconsin, New York and Connecticut thoroughly studied. This is NO appreciable source of farm labor. Only about 1500 in entire country with farm experience. 5. FSA farm labor camps in areas dependent on migratory workers: Every effort being made to provide these but they are tied up in WPB priorities. Instead of depending upon this, it is recommended that local farm groups hunt for unused summer camps, etc. for housing. 6. There is need for greater recognition of importance of farm worker to war effort. May be program on this. Some areas doing good work with posters putting farm labor on same line with soldier, defense industry worker. Need for good posters in right places. Get them out. Good work done in some areas with appeals to High School students. Generally, there are no complaints about lack of Selective Service cooperation now.

TRANSPORTATION: Office of Defense Transportation has suspended until July 1 its order that persons hauling farm produce to market must haul back at least a 75 percent full load. This order, which applied to all except farmer-owned trucks, would have been effective June 1. It was criticized by farmers, at recent conferences throughout country on transportation problems, who stressed the seasonal movement of farm products and fact that 75 percent full return loads might not be available at those times. AWA observers at the transportation meetings reported great deal of farmer interest and evident desire to cooperate in program to conserve farm trucks and tires.

STORAGE: WPB has amended its order (L121) freezing lumber to permit construction of farm storage facilities and manufacture of boxes and crates for shipping farm products. Farmers may get lumber from retailers by signing endorsement that it will be used for construction, extension, remodeling, repairing or maintenance of facilities for storage of agricultural products or for packaging, boxing, crating or stowing farm products for shipments. Grain storage is going under permit system such as was in effect last year. Grain will not be moved into storage areas without permit. Permit will not be granted unless storage space is available. Already in operation in some areas, system will be extended to others by industry committees representing interested parties and .. USDA.

VICTORY FOOD SPECIAL: program is rolling right along. (WB letters No. 16 and 17.) Asparagus and spinach will be featured north of Virginia and east of Ohio June 1 to 8, and onions, nationally, June 8 to 15. Looks now as if tomatoes will be featured last week in June, and peaches about mid-July. Whether these latter foods will actually be designated depends on developments in next few weeks but present out-